

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4542
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5392

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, SY, US
SUBJ: US ACCUSED OF PROMOTING ILLUSORY PEACE EFFORTS

1. IN SHARPEST CRITICISM OF US YET APPEARING IN SYRIAN MEDIA
SINCE SECRETARY'S VISIT, US WAS ACCUSED OF SOWING FALSE HOPES
IN ITS PEACE EFFORTS BECAUSE OF "FAILURE" TO SECURE ROLE FOR
PALESTINIANS IN PEACE PROCESS. AHMAD SAWWAN WRITING IN THAWRA
AUGUST 23 ARGUED THAT VANCE'S INABILITY TO FIND ROLE FOR PALESTIN-
IANS DURING LATEST VISIT "INDICATES THAT AMERICAN MIRACLE OF
FINDING A SOLUTION IS MERELY AN ILLUSION."

2. SAWWAN CLAIMED VANCE'S HOPES OF TRANSCENDING MAIN
OBSTACLE OF FINDING SOLUTION TO OBSTRUCTIONS FACING GENEVA
(PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION) HAD ACTUALLY HARDENED POSITIONS
ON THE QUESTION--ESPECIALLY ISRAELI'S. HE CONTENDED THAT ARAB
MODERATION HAD BEEN MET WITH INCREASED ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE
AND NOTED THAT "OBSERVERS" WERE SAYING: "THE ARABS
GAVE VANCE A BLANK CHECK BUT VANCE RECIPROCATED WITH
AN UNCOVERED ONE." SAWWAN PROPOSED THAT ARABS SHOULD
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RECOGNIZE THAT US DID NOT WANT ME SOLUTION BUT WAS
CONFINING ITS EFFORTS TO INSURING ISRAEL'S PRESENCE.

3. SAWWAN THEN DREDGED UP ARGUMENTS RELATING
TO ZIONIST INFLUENCE OVER US FOREIGN POLICY AND DESIRE OF
ISREEL LOBBY TO KEEP PLO OUT OF GENEVA. HE CONCLUDED THAT
SECRETARY VANCE IS STANDING STILL WHILE APPEARING TO BE IN

MOTION, LIKE A "JUGGLER."

4. MORE MODERATELY WORDED EDITORIAL APPEARED IN BAATH ON EUROPEAN AND US REACTIONS TO ISREALI POLICY ON WEST BANK. EDITORIAL NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR LEWIS' RECENT CRITICISM OF NEW SETTLEMENTS WAS LATEST US STATEMENT ON POLICY WHICH US BEGAN CRITICISING AFTER LEGALIZATION OF THREE SETTLEMENTS ONWEST BANK IN JULY. IT SAW SUCH STATEMENTS MOTIVATED BY US DESIRE TO MAINTAIN ITS STATUS AS MEDIATOR AND ITS VIEW THAT SUCH POLICIES HAMPERED PEACE EFFORTS. EDITORIAL CONTENDED THAT US REALIZED ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SETTLEMENTS WOULD LEAD ARABS TO RESORT TOUNIFIED ACTION. IN CONCLUSION, AL-BAATH CHARACTERIZED US POSITION AS NEGATIVE SINCE IT CONFINED ITSELF TO VERBAL CRITMGCISM OF ISRAEL'S POLICY.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SYRIAN MEDIA OFTEN CRITICAL OF PERCEIVED US RETICENCE TO PRESSURE ISRAEL FOR CONCESSIONS, SAWWAN'S COMMENTS SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER THAN ANY PREVIOUS EDITORIAL SINCE SECRETARY'S VISIT. BLUNTNESS AND TENOR OF HIS VIEWS INDICATE SYRIAN FRUSTRATION AND CONCERN AT US INABILITY TO GENERATE ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR RECONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE WHILE ISRAEL PUSHING AHEAD WITH MEASURES ON VEWBANK WHICH US APPEARS UNABLE TO COUNTER. AS SECOND EDITORIAL INDICATED US CRITICISMS OF ISRAEL'S WEST BANK POLICIES WELCOMED BUT VIEWED AS LESS THAN EFFECTIVE WAY OF REVERSING ISRAELI POLICY. CONFIDENTIAL

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MURPHY

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